Under 10th Plan Scheme, MFPI has approved financial assistane of Rs. 208.54 crore for fifty six (56) food parks in the country including four food parks in Rajasthan upto 31st March, 2007. Of this, financial assistance of Rs. 12.51 crore has been approved for four Food Parks at Ranpur (District Kota), Boranda (District Jodhpur), Sri Ganganagar and Alwar in Rajasthan.

Position of India in the Human Development Index of UNDP

*54. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) is it correct that India still has the largest number of illiterates in the world and according to the 2001 census, India had nearly 304 million illiterate people, aged seven plus, and with its poor literacy level, India ranks a poor 126th in the Human Development Index of UNDP;

(b) whether despite two nation-wide programmes, *i.e.* Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Literacy Mission, illiteracy rate has not been reduced; and

(c) if so, the main reasons for non-elimination of illiteracy completely in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) and (b) In the past decades, there had been a continuous increase in India in the absolute number of illiterates, despite the increase in the literacy rate. However, for the first time in the year 2001, the total number of illiterates got reduced to 304.11 million from 328.88 million in the year 1991, which works out to reduction in illiteracy from 47.8% of the population in 1991 to 35.2% in 2001.

As per Human Development Report 2006, India ranks 126th out of the 177 countries of the world covered by this Report. Adult literacy is only one of the several variables on the basis of which the Human Development Index is calculated. It would not be correct to say that the illiteracy rate has not been reduced despite major schemes such as the National Literacy Mission (NLM) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The decline in the number/percentage of the illiterate persons as noted above, can be attributed largely to the activities under Elementary Education and Adult Education. Under SSA, which commenced in 2001, substantially larger enrolment of children has been recorded as also a fall in the number of out-of-school children.

(c) Various socio-economic factors such as poverty and lack of awareness, contribute to the persistence of the illiteracy in the country.

Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research Programme

*55. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have planned to initiate Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research Programme for the promotion of research activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the fiscal allocation for this programme; and

(d) the number of scientists and research scholars expected to be selected under this programme, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has mounted a special scholarship scheme titled "Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research" (INSPIRE) to attract talented youth to study and careers with science. The main features of the INSPIRE are: (a) Scheme for Early Attraction of Talents for Science (SEATS) providing Science innovation scholarship of Rs. 5000 for a total of one million young learners of the age group 10—15 years once in their school career during the next five years for experiencing the joy of innovations. This includes with a mentorship through global science leader including Nobel Prize winners and Indian leaders in science through a summer camp for the top1% performers in the Class X examination every year for a period of five years; (b) Scholarships for Higher Education (SHE) for the age group of 17—22 years targets 10,000 fellowships per year @ Rs. 1.0 lakh per year for continuing science education at BSc and MSc levels and (c) Assured Opportunity for Research Careers (AORC) for the age group of 22—32 years for 5 years doctoral research backed by an assured research career opportunity scheme for a another period of five years after their PhD in sciences. About 1000 young people in each category would be considered under this program.

The allocation in 2007-08 for the above programmes is Rs. 110 crore including Rs. 100 crore allocation for SHE. The scheme envisages that the available number of scholarships would be distributed to students from various boards based on total number of students taking their examinations in the respective Boards.

Cases of ragging

*56. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number and details of cases of ragging reported during the last three academic years, State-wise and year-wise;

(b) whether the Government plan to introduce better methods of introducing freshers to the old students; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) Information on cases pertaining to ragging in higher educational institutions is not being maintained centrally. A Monitoring Committee has been appointed by the Supreme Court of India *vide* interim orders dated the 16th May 2007 in SLP(C) No. 24296-24299 of 2004 to oversee the compliance with its directions. The Monitoring Committee has come across approximately 70 incidents of ragging in various parts of the country, as reported by the media, during the current academic session, 2007-08. In the said interim order, the Supreme Court has accepted several recommendations of the Committee for Prevention of Ragging, constituted earlier by this Ministry on the directions of the Apex Court, which include among other things, introduction of junior students to senior students only in the presence of faculty members, welcome parties to "freshers" by Heads of Institutions, orientation programmes, joint sensitization programmes and counseling of both "freshers" and seniors by a professional counselor, a calendar of cultural, sports and other activities to provide a common platform for "freshers" and seniors to interact with each other in the presence of faculty members. The Monitoring Committee has asked the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and other regulatory agencies responsible for maintenance of standards of education, to give feedback on the implementation of the Court's directives for the prevention of ragging.